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Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa

I. Introduction

1. In a letter dated 20 December 2010 (S/2010/661), the President of the Security Council agreed to extend the mandate of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) until 31 December 2013 and requested me to report to the Council every six months on the implementation of the revised mandate of the Office.

2. The present report covers the period from 1 January to 30 June 2013. It provides an overview of national, cross-cutting and cross-border developments in West Africa and outlines the activities undertaken by UNOWA in the areas of preventive diplomacy, early warning and capacity-building to address emerging threats and challenges to regional peace and stability. It also outlines the efforts of the Office to enhance synergies with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Mano River Union and the African Union in the promotion of peace and stability in the subregion.

II. Developments and trends in West Africa

A. Political trends

3. Since the issuance of my previous report, dated 31 December 2012 (S/2012/977), the political landscape in West Africa has continued to be dominated by the consequences of the crises in Mali and the Sahel, the election-related tensions in a number of countries and the incomplete transition in Guinea-Bissau. In Mali, with the start of the French-led military operations in January, ECOWAS member States mobilized and deployed troops under the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) to provide support to the Malian defence and security forces for the restoration of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

4. The military operations in Mali highlighted the need for enhanced regional cooperation on security and for more robust domestic measures to prevent the infiltration of terrorist groups from neighbouring countries. In this respect, a number of initiatives were taken at the subregional level, notably the adoption of a counter-terrorism strategy by the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS at its forty-second ordinary session, held in Yamoussoukro on 27 and 28 February

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2013. Meanwhile, the Security Council adopted resolution 2100 (2013), by which it established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and transferred the authority from AFISMA to MINUSMA on 1 July. Apart from the security concerns, the United Nations will focus primarily on the dialogue and reconciliation process and the establishment of conditions conducive to the holding of elections.

5. Despite the progress made towards building democratic and effective institutions in the subregion, several countries continued to face election-related tensions. In Guinea, Mauritania and Togo, divergences persisted between the Government and opposition parties regarding the holding of legislative elections. In Guinea and Togo, the tensions have escalated into violent demonstrations, resulting in the loss of lives and damage to property. In Côte d'Ivoire, local elections held on 21 April were boycotted by the former ruling party, the Front populaire ivorien, which resulted in some localized incidents of violence. In the Gambia, reforms to ensure free and fair elections were not implemented prior to the local polls, leading the opposition parties to withdraw from participating.

6. In spite of these challenges, the subregion witnessed positive developments in the area of regional cooperation and integration. In February, the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea committed themselves to resolving the long-standing dispute over the border village of Kpéaba through peaceful means by withdrawing their respective armed forces from the area and establishing a joint demarcation commission. Likewise, the border dispute between the Niger and Burkina Faso was resolved by an International Court of Justice Judgment of 16 April 2013, which redefined the border to their mutual satisfaction.

B. Security trends, including terrorism, maritime security, drug trafficking and organized crime

7. Three geographical areas remain considerable sources of instability in West Africa, namely, the Mano River basin, the Gulf of Guinea and the Sahel. In the Mano River basin, the situation remains generally volatile, mainly owing to growing income inequalities and the attendant social tensions, youth unemployment, environmental degradation, and weak security and justice sectors, as well as incomplete processes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. These domestic challenges to stability are compounded by the existence of porous national borders, which facilitate the unhindered cross-border movement of weapons and criminal groups. In the Gulf of Guinea, cross-border threats have taken on a new dimension as a result of piracy and other forms of organized crime. The crisis in Mali and the fragility in the Sahel continue to affect the other countries of West Africa, while exposing the interconnectedness of transnational threats in the subregion.

8. Moreover, violent religious extremism and terrorism seem to be spreading throughout West Africa and beyond. This was illustrated by the hostage crisis in the Tigantourine gas plant near In Amenas, Algeria, on 16 January and the kidnapping of a French family in Cameroon on 19 February. In addition, in the Niger on 23 May, two attacks claimed by the Movement for Jihad and Unity in West Africa targeted a military barracks in the northern city of Agadez, and a uranium plant in Arlit in the north-central part of the country. In turn, the militant group Boko Haram

has expanded its activities beyond the territory of Nigeria, thus becoming a threat to stability in the entire region. As a result of the increasing level of violence in the north-eastern region of the country, the President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, on 14 May declared a state of emergency in the three states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. Subsequently, on 15 May, the Nigerian military was deployed in large numbers to these states to combat Boko Haram. On 4 June, the Nigerian Government officially declared the group and its suspected off-shoot, known as Ansaru, as "illegal and terrorist" and issued a law banning them.

9. The limitations of regional capacities to build collective security mechanisms in West Africa have been exposed by the inadequate response to the crisis in Mali, as well as the inability of Sahelian States to enhance border control and fight terrorism. The crises in Mali and Guinea-Bissau have also highlighted the challenges posed by weak security sector institutions and the threat of transnational organized crime in West Africa. Notwithstanding some progress made in regard to security sector reform initiatives in Guinea-Bissau and Guinea, the ECOWAS draft political framework and plan of action on security sector governance is yet to be finalized.

10. Drug seizures in the subregion have confirmed that West Africa remains a transit point for illicit drug trafficking. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 127 kilograms of heroin were apprehended in January at the Port of Cotonou, Benin; 282 kilograms of cocaine were seized in February at the port of Tema, Ghana; 168 kilograms of cocaine departing from Senegal were seized in March in waters of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and in Togo, 14 kilograms of methamphetamine were seized at Lomé international airport. On 23 March, a ship carrying two tons of cocaine from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was intercepted at sea, 700 miles south-west of Cape Verde. In April, Mauritanian security forces seized, at the Algerian border, about one ton of various illicit drugs arriving from northern Mali, confirming the continuous use of the Saharan route. Counterfeit medicine trafficking, methamphetamine production and drug abuse are also increasing concerns in the subregion.

11. Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea remains a threat to the security and economic activities of the affected countries. Between 1 January and 29 May, 29 attempted or committed acts of piracy and armed robbery in West African waters were reported to the International Maritime Organization, compared with 30 in 2012. Of the reported 29 incidents, 4 involved the hijacking of ships which were subsequently released. Furthermore, a casualty was reported on 4 February, when a tanker was fired upon while at anchorage in Lagos, resulting in the death of one crew member. A summit of Heads of State was held in Cameroon on 24 and 25 June, as requested by the Security Council in resolution 2039 (2012). The summit adopted the Code of Conduct concerning the Prevention and Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships, and Illegal Maritime Activities in West and Central Africa, which defines the regional strategy and paves the way for a legally binding instrument. Meanwhile, the validation process of an ECOWAS integrated maritime strategy and integrated implementation plan continues through consultations with independent experts, civil society organizations and media.

12. There was a reduced number of cross-border attacks along the border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire as a result of the continued efforts of the Governments of

Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, with the support of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). However, the situation remained tense owing to the reported presence of mercenaries, former combatants and other armed elements, as well as the uncontrolled circulation of weapons.

C. Economic, social and humanitarian trends

13. According to ECOWAS, in the first half of 2013, economic growth for West Africa was approximately 7 per cent, compared with 4.5 per cent for the whole continent, while inflation stood at around 7.3 per cent throughout the subregion. The countries that registered the highest growth, namely, Liberia at 8.3 per cent, Sierra Leone at 19.7 per cent and Côte d'Ivoire at 9.8 per cent, belong to the most prosperous yet politically fragile region of the Mano River basin. During the reporting period, ECOWAS continued its efforts to achieve economic and monetary integration by 2020, launching a programme aimed at developing infrastructure, investing in agriculture and promoting youth employment.

14. Despite a strong economic performance, West Africa continues to be affected by high levels of poverty, unequal distribution of wealth, high rates of youth unemployment and recurrent natural disasters. Likewise, the persistence of high food and fuel prices continues to have an impact on the living conditions of large segments of the population. Human development indicators in some of the countries are among the lowest in the world.

15. The humanitarian situation in West Africa continued to be dominated by the food insecurity and malnutrition crisis in the Sahel and displacement resulting from the conflict in Mali and the security situation in north-eastern Nigeria. Across the Sahel, an estimated 11.4 million people remain food insecure and are in need of assistance. In some regions of Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, children under 5 years of age suffer from global acute malnutrition that is above the emergency threshold. With the exception of Nigeria, which accounts for 50 per cent of the cereal production of the region, countries in the Sahel experienced a good 2012/13 harvest. However, chronic vulnerability, high food prices and access constraints continue to undermine the ability of populations to recover from the 2012 drought, and their resilience to withstand future shocks is limited.

16. Insecurity across West Africa is also affecting the humanitarian situation. In Nigeria, the National Emergency Management Agency reported that, as of end-April 2013, the population displaced owing to inter-communal conflict and insecurity had risen to 32,000, with at least 1,100 fatalities. In Yobe State, the killing by suspected Boko Haram elements of 10 health workers conducting a polio vaccination campaign on 9 February and of three doctors from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea two days later was a setback to efforts to eradicate polio in the country, where more than one half of the global polio cases have been recorded.

17. In Côte d'Ivoire, the overall humanitarian situation continued to progressively improve, although 45,000 internally displaced people still remain in the country, while 81,000 have found refuge in neighbouring countries. Despite a wave of returns in the first quarter of 2013 under the voluntary repatriation operations of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, insecurity in the

west of the country has hampered sustainable returns. In March, new attacks by armed men in areas along the Liberian border triggered temporary displacements of between 7,000 and 8,000 people, while in May, more than 450 people fled to Liberia. Since the beginning of the crisis in Mali, instability in the north of the country has resulted in the total displacement of 475,000 people, including 174,000 who sought refuge in neighbouring countries. Since January, an estimated 60,000 people have been displaced from their homes, while an additional 10,000 people have been displaced in two sites in the region of Kidal.

D. Trends relating to good governance, rule of law and human rights

18. Efforts towards promoting and protecting human rights in West Africa have been hampered by the political instability, election-related tensions, intercommunal violence and the growing threat of terrorism. A number of alleged incidents of extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances have yet to be fully investigated. In other instances in which prosecutions are under way, progress remains slow. Nonetheless, some positive steps have been taken by a number of West African countries to foster a culture of good governance and rule of law. Much remains to be done in building the capacity of State institutions in the region to address impunity, as called for in the Bamako Declaration adopted by the Regional Conference on Impunity, Justice and Human Rights in West Africa, organized under the auspices of UNOWA and held in Bamako from 2 to 4 December 2011.

19. Meanwhile, civil society in West Africa, in particular women's organizations, remained engaged to defuse tensions, promote a culture of good governance and prevent conflicts at the local level. Efforts to strengthen coordination among women's networks in the subregion continued through the efforts of the Working Group on Women, Peace and Security in West Africa, established by UNOWA and the United Nations Development Fund for Women in 2009.

III. Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa

A. United Nations good offices and activities in the areas of peace consolidation and conflict prevention

20. During the period under review, UNOWA continued to provide the Organization's good offices, focusing on the consolidation of democratic processes and institutions throughout the region and, in particular, on addressing election-related tensions in Guinea and the return to constitutional order in Mali.

Mali and the Sahel

21. My Special Representative for West Africa, Said Djinnit, continued to work closely with the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as with Malian, regional and international stakeholders, in providing support for the implementation of the strategic concept for Mali, adopted at the meeting of the Support and Follow-up Group on the Situation in Mali, held in Bamako on 19 October 2012. UNOWA also continued to engage in the development of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel (see S/2013/354), in close collaboration with my Special Envoy for the Sahel, Romano Prodi, the United Nations Development Group

regional team in Dakar and the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator. In Mali, prior to the resumption of hostilities in January, my Special Representative supported the efforts of the ECOWAS mediation team to prepare for negotiations with groups in the north.

22. With the resumption of hostilities, and in support of the efforts of the United Nations Office in Mali (UNOM) and subsequently of MINUSMA, my Special Representative consulted with various stakeholders on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2085 (2012), as well as options for engaging with non-terrorist groups and other representatives of the northern populations to achieve a lasting solution to the crisis. Specifically, he held discussions on various occasions with the Malian transitional authorities in Bamako; the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, in his capacity as the ECOWAS Mediator for Mali; the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo; and a number of Heads of State and Government in the region. He also led the United Nations delegations to the sessions of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council and the ECOWAS summit of Heads of State and Government, and participated in the United Nations high-level delegations to the meetings of the Follow-up and Support Group on Mali held in Brussels on 5 February and in Bamako on 19 April. Throughout the reporting period, he has collaborated closely with the ECOWAS Commission, the Heads of UNOM, AFISMA and, subsequently, MINUSMA, to promote political dialogue and the implementation of Security Council resolution 2100 (2013).

23. Meanwhile, in the context of the development of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, my Special Representative and my Special Envoy for the Sahel jointly visited Senegal, Mauritania, Burkina Faso and the Niger from 13 to 15 February. They met with Heads of State, Government officials, civil society leaders and the United Nations country teams to discuss the challenges facing the region and the required areas of intervention to address the underlying causes of fragility. In Niamey, they attended the International Seminar on Security and Development in the Sahel-Sahara, organized by the Government of the Niger, the International Peace Institute and the Centre for Security Strategies for the Sahel-Sahara.

Guinea

24. Over the past six months, the political situation in Guinea has evolved positively. Between January and mid-March, deep divisions and mistrust between the Government and the opposition generated considerable political tensions, a climate of social instability and violent incidents, particularly in Conakry. The disagreements centred on three key issues related to the long-delayed legislative elections; the choice of Waymark InfoTech, a South African company, as the technical operator for the elections; the President's selection of the head of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), strongly contested by the opposition leaders; and the participation of Guinean citizens of the diaspora in the forthcoming elections. Furthermore, each side blamed the other for the violence and heavy loss of life and damage to property in Conakry. This had led opposition leaders to call for international mediation, to which the Presidential camp was vehemently opposed.

25. As members of the Security Council are aware, since the outbreak of the crisis I have offered the good offices of the United Nations in Guinea through my Special

Representative for West Africa. In this connection, my Special Representative paid numerous visits to Conakry, offering advice and encouraging both sides to engage in constructive dialogue, while at the same time building a strong partnership with interested regional leaders and key members of the international community represented in the country. Thus, by the end of March, despite continuing disagreements, the President of Guinea, Alpha Condé, and the main opposition leaders, Cellou Dalein Diallo, Sidya Touré and Lansana Kouyaté, had agreed to discuss their differences regarding the organization of legislative elections. At the suggestion of my Special Representative for West Africa, President Condé and Mr. Diallo had their first face-to-face meeting since April 2012 in the presence of President of Senegal, Macky Sall, in Nouakchott on 24 and 25 March. They both expressed their willingness to seek a compromise for the sake of the country.

26. Subsequently, the parties agreed to engage in structured discussions on the organization of legislative elections with the help of a team of facilitators. At the request of the parties, I appointed my Special Representative to serve on this team on 12 April. The team of facilitators has helped the Guinean parties to manage their intense mutual distrust and overcome their initial reluctance to negotiate. On 24 April, the parties signed an anti-violence declaration, which has helped to significantly reduce political tensions.

27. The dialogue is chaired by the Foreign Minister of Guinea and attended by representatives of the Guinean Government, the opposition parties, France and the United States of America, the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Guinea. Its agenda includes: (a) issues related to the technical operator and the electoral register; (b) the functioning of CENI; (c) the vote of Guineans living abroad; and (d) the electoral timeline.

28. The parties have made significant progress on all agenda items. They have agreed that Guinean citizens living in 17 countries can participate in the elections, they have reached a compromise on modalities to improve the functioning and transparency of CENI and they have agreed on a series of measures to enhance the transparency and fairness of the electoral process. On 13 June, the President of CENI communicated to my Special Representative for West Africa and his co-facilitators a revised electoral timetable which sets 28 July as the date for the elections, establishes 18 June as the deadline for the submission of candidatures for the legislative elections and reopens voter registration for the six-day period from 18 to 24 June. Although the revised timetable was presented by the CENI leadership as the result of a consensus among its 24 commissioners, some members of CENI, echoed by the opposition parties, pointed to some incoherence in the revised timetable. They suggested that further consultations be held with the parties, under the auspices of the team of facilitators, to reach a suitable compromise on new dates for the elections, taking into consideration all financial and technical constraints related to the polls. Meanwhile, the parties were encouraged to continue to show flexibility and willingness to compromise in discussions on the remaining issues, including the electoral timetable. Clearly, these gains are fragile and can easily be reversed. As the present report was being finalized, my Special Representative was preparing to undertake his ninth visit to Conakry to resume his consultations with the Guinean parties.

29. The complex and delicate problems confronting Guinea are far from being resolved; however, the shift from a confrontational stance on both sides to a constructive engagement in dialogue bodes well for addressing the outstanding issues. The progress we are witnessing is a tribute to the remarkable skills of my Special Representative and his co-facilitators. The support they received from the United Nations country team and the multifaceted assistance offered by the representatives of the European Union, OIF, France and the United States in Conakry contributed in no small way to the progress made so far.

Gambia

30. From 11 to 15 February, UNOWA and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) dispatched a joint early warning mission to the Gambia to assess the political and human rights situation, to follow up on a number of human rights issues and to explore new avenues of cooperation with the United Nations country team. During the visit, it was observed that the country continued to be confronted with political and human rights challenges, as illustrated by the opposition's decision to boycott the local elections on 4 April. In its findings, the mission noted that there was a need for the Government to address prevailing tensions relating to human rights, as well as electoral and judicial processes. The release of human rights activist Imam Baba Leigh on 16 May was a positive step in that direction.

Togo

31. Political tensions persisted in Togo as preparations for the legislative elections, scheduled to be held on 21 July, continued in parallel with efforts to resume the political dialogue, which have thus far failed to persuade the opposition to fully join the electoral process. The situation was further complicated when two fire incidents, which destroyed the markets of Kara and Lomé on 9 and 11 January, respectively, led to the arrest of some 24 people, including representatives of opposition political parties, youth groups and civil society organizations. Meanwhile, efforts to foster political dialogue between the Government and the opposition have been spearheaded by a group of ambassadors in Lomé and the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Togo. Against this background, UNOWA dispatched an early warning mission to Lomé from 25 February to 1 March. The mission noted the need for high-level subregional involvement in support of national efforts to facilitate dialogue among the concerned Togolese stakeholders. Meanwhile, the biometric voter registration was completed on 30 April and, according to the Independent National Electoral Commission, more than 3.1 million voters have been registered. However, the opposition denounced the registration process and called for an audit of the electoral list. Building on his engagement in the country in 2012, my Special Representative confirmed to the Togolese authorities his readiness to extend his good offices. He continues to remain in contact with the United Nations Resident Coordinator to monitor the situation and will visit Togo prior to the legislative elections. The Independent National Electoral Commission decided to extend the deadline for the submission of candidatures from 16 to 19 June 2013. Subsequently, this decision was praised by the opposition, who submitted its candidatures by the 19 June deadline. The Government has expressed its commitment to convening a political dialogue with all parties immediately after the elections.

Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission

32. The Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, chaired by my Special Representative, continued to make progress towards the implementation of the International Court of Justice ruling of 10 October 2002 on the land and maritime boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria. During the thirty-first session of the Mixed Commission, held in Yaoundé on 25 and 26 April, the delegations of Cameroon and Nigeria endorsed the outcome of the successful field assessment mission to the Gotel Mountains, one of the most inaccessible areas of the land boundary. The parties have so far agreed on 1,893 kilometres of the estimated 2,100-kilometre land boundary. After completion of the remaining distance, final maps of the international boundary will be prepared for validation and signature by the parties. These maps will be part of a boundary agreement, the form of which remains to be agreed upon. The Mixed Commission has further agreed to resume the construction of the boundary pillars, which has been interrupted since 2011. Under the new process, 323 of the remaining 920 boundary pillars will be constructed in the southern part of the land boundary by the end of 2013.

33. The Follow-up Committee established to monitor the implementation of the Greentree Agreement held its twenty-first and twenty-second meetings in Geneva, on 27 and 28 March and on 27 and 28 May, respectively, under the chairmanship of my Special Representative, with the participation of the representatives of Cameroon and Nigeria and the four witness States to the Agreement. The Committee reviewed the reports of the United Nations observers deployed to Bakassi and noted that, except for acts of banditry at sea, overall peace and tranquillity prevailed in the area. The Committee also noted the adherence of both parties to the Greentree Agreement, as well as the cordial relationship between the population and the Cameroonian security forces.

34. During the reporting period, the European Union, which funded demarcation activities from 2006 to 2010, carried out an independent evaluation of the assistance it provided. Highlighting the genuine ownership of the parties, the evaluation noted the positive impact of the process towards reaching a sustainable settlement of the boundary dispute. The review recommended, inter alia, a further contribution for the completion of construction of the boundary pillars, along with accompanying measures to minimize the risk of future disagreements and conflicts.

35. With regard to confidence-building measures, my Special Representative launched a funding appeal for the socioeconomic programme of the Mixed Commission which focuses on development projects for the border communities. In this connection, the European Union has expressed its commitment to continue to provide funding from the eleventh European Development Fund (2014-2020), while the World Bank has expressed its commitment to promote confidence-building projects for the populations affected by the demarcation.

B. Enhancing subregional capacities to address cross-border and cross-cutting threats to peace and security, including piracy

Security sector reform

36. Since my previous report, UNOWA has continued to provide support for the development of security sector reform capacities and of nationally led initiatives in

the subregion, in cooperation with key partners, including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNDP and the Peacebuilding Support Office. At the subregional level, my Special Representative discussed the draft ECOWAS political framework and plan of action on security sector governance and reform with the President of the ECOWAS Commission in Abuja, on 14 January. On 14 June in Dakar, UNOWA and ECOWAS discussed ways in which the United Nations could support that process.

37. Under the supervision of my Special Representative and in cooperation with the United Nations Resident Coordinator, the United Nations security sector reform advisory team provided the Guinean leadership with strategic advice and support in the reorganization of the supervisory and follow-up structures governing the national security sector reform process, with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund.

38. On 16 January, the Strategic Orientation Commission, which is the highest body of the National Steering Committee for Security Sector Reform and chaired by President Condé, outlined the national vision on defence and security. During the meeting, the five Ministries concerned, the Ministries of Defence, Security and Civil Protection, Justice, Finance and Environment, affirmed their commitment to complete their legal framework, finalize their sector-based policies and include security sector reform-related activities in their respective budgets for 2013. In this regard, the first Guinean laws regulating the special status of the police and civilian protection forces were approved by the President on 16 January, consistent with the recommendations contained in the report on an assessment of the security sector, conducted jointly by ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations and presented in May 2010. Following the approval of the judiciary act by the National Transition Council on 17 May, the constitutionality of the act will be examined by the Supreme Court prior to its promulgation.

39. In support of the national vision on defence and security, the security sector reform advisory team convened two workshops, on 5 and 6 March and from 8 to 12 April, to finalize the sectoral policies of the five Ministries concerned, which were subsequently validated in May. Moreover, the team provided support for the work of the Special Adviser to the Guinean President on the reform of the justice sector, particularly in relation to preparations for the presidential decree of 20 March, which established the National Steering Committee for Justice Sector Reform.

Drug trafficking and transnational organized crime

40. At its forty-second ordinary session, held in Yamoussoukro on 27 and 28 February, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government reaffirmed its commitment to the Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in West Africa and the 2008-2011 Regional Action Plan to Address the Growing Problem of Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse in West Africa, and decided to extend the Regional Action Plan for an additional two years. Together with UNODC, UNOWA will provide support for the ECOWAS-led revision exercise during the course of 2013-2014.

41. Meanwhile, the first meeting of the Network of West African Central Authorities and Prosecutors was held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 28 to 30 May, pursuant to the recommendations of a meeting of experts held in November 2012. The initiative, led by UNODC, is part of the implementation of the outcome of the

Regional Conference on Impunity, Justice and Human Rights, held in Bamako in December 2011 with the support of UNOWA. The Network is aimed at strengthening knowledge on judicial cooperation in criminal matters, as well as building capacity for the prosecution of cases of illicit drug trafficking and other transborder crimes.

42. As part of the efforts to mobilize support for the implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan, my Special Representative, at the invitation of ECOWAS, participated in the joint launch of the UNODC report, *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment*, in Abidjan on 25 February. He also provided support to the Kofi Annan Foundation in connection with the launch of the Commission on the Impact of Drug Trafficking on Governance, Security and Development in West Africa, in Accra on 31 January. The Commission, headed by former President of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo aims to strengthen the implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan, as well as regional and national efforts to address drug trafficking. Together with UNODC, UNOWA also contributed to discussions in the meeting of experts of the Group of Eight Plus Five on transnational organized crime in West Africa, hosted in London on 5 June, which, by focusing international attention on the issue in 2013, highlighted the intent of the Group of Eight to further the momentum set by its ministerial meeting held in Paris in 2011.

43. UNOWA continued to advocate for greater international political and operational commitment to the implementation of the West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI). To this end, on 11 March, the WACI Programme Advisory Committee adopted a revised regional strategy to be considered at the next WACI High-Level Policy Committee meeting. The strategy aims to maximize the partners' efforts by focusing on the development of transnational crime units and a related regional management structure. On 12 April, my Special Representative and the President of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), Mireille Ballestrazzi, discussed ways to enhance support to West Africa. Meanwhile, UNOWA, UNODC, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and INTERPOL continued to cooperate on the implementation of the Initiative. Following earlier recommendations by the WACI Programme Advisory Committee, the WACI implementing partners fielded an assessment mission to Sierra Leone from 9 to 19 April. The mission concluded with proposals for the readjustment of international support for the transnational crime unit in view of the future drawdown of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). Moreover, in March, Sierra Leone and Liberia initiated technical exchange visits of their respective transnational crime units, as part of a lessons-learned exercise to improve cross-border cooperation.

Counter-terrorism

44. At its forty-second ordinary session held in Yamoussoukro, ECOWAS endorsed its Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Implementation Plan, as well as the Political Declaration on a Common Position against Terrorism. Meanwhile, UNOWA participated in the visit of the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate to Abuja, from 19 to 22 February. During the visit, the Nigerian federal authorities reaffirmed their commitment to cooperate with international partners on counter-terrorism and requested the support of the United Nations.

45. On 17 May, I received a letter from President Goodluck Jonathan informing me of his decision to proclaim a state of emergency in three north-eastern States of Nigeria following increased terrorist attacks in the region, with a view to restoring normalcy. With respect to the security developments in the north-east of Nigeria, my Special Representative visited Nigeria on 10 and 11 June and met with senior government officials. He seized the opportunity to convey United Nations support for and solidarity with the authorities and people of Nigeria, while underscoring the need to ensure that the security sectors incorporate a human rights perspective in their work. He reiterated to the Nigerian Government the readiness of the United Nations to assist the country in implementing relevant regional, continental and international mechanisms and an associated framework to combat the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram.

Maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

46. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2039 (2012), my Special Representative continued to work closely with the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) to provide support for and facilitate the meetings of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) concerning the development of a regional anti-piracy strategy for the Gulf of Guinea. In this context, the interministerial Conference on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea was held in Cotonou, Benin, on 19 March, with the participation of UNOWA and UNOCA. The Conference reviewed and validated strategic documents, including the draft code of conduct concerning the prevention and repression of piracy, armed robbery against ships and illicit maritime activities in West and Central Africa; the draft memorandum of understanding between ECCAS, ECOWAS and GGC on maritime safety and security in West and Central Africa; and the draft declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the two regions on maritime safety and security in their common maritime domain. The interministerial meeting also paved the way for the convening of a summit of Heads of State in Cameroon on 24 and 25 June.

Development of a subregional strategy for the Mano River basin

47. The Security Council, in its resolutions 2000 (2011), 2062 (2012) and 2066 (2012), encouraged ECOWAS and the Mano River Union to develop, with the support of UNOWA, a subregional strategy to address cross-border threats, such as movements of armed groups and weapons and illicit trafficking, with the assistance of UNOCI and UNMIL, as appropriate. On 14 January, my Special Representative and the President of the ECOWAS Commission agreed to convene a meeting in regard to the relevant Security Council resolutions. Subsequently, and further to consultations with the Mano River Union, my Special Representative convened in Dakar, on 29 June, a high-level meeting on the subregional strategy for the Mano River basin to identify concrete steps towards the development of such a strategy.

C. Promotion of good governance, respect for the rule of law, human rights and gender mainstreaming

48. UNOWA continued to provide support for efforts to protect human rights and promote gender mainstreaming. On 3 April, UNOWA and UNOM jointly organized in Dakar a seminar on the impacts of the Malian crisis on human rights, with the

participation of civil society actors. During the fifty-third session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, held in Banjul from 9 to 22 April, UNOWA organized, together with the Commission and the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, a panel discussion on human rights and the threats of terrorism and transnational organized crime in Africa.

49. From 16 to 18 April, UNOWA organized jointly with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), OHCHR, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and the Working Group on Women, Peace and Security in West Africa a regional workshop on strategic planning. The workshop led to the adoption of a joint programme on gender, peace and security in West Africa, as well as the establishment of associated national institutions. The meeting was opened by my Special Representative, who welcomed the fact that 11 of the 16 countries of the subregion had adopted a national plan of action on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

50. In Guinea, my Special Representative has placed specific emphasis on ensuring the full participation of women in his facilitation efforts. This led to the establishment of a consultative mechanism of women leaders, previously trained by UNOWA in mediation in 2012, who meet on a bimonthly basis to contribute to the current facilitation efforts. Their engagement is being supported by UN-Women, with the assistance of the Peacebuilding Commission.

D. Inter-institutional cooperation

United Nations inter-institutional cooperation

51. On 12 February, my Special Representative chaired the twelfth meeting of regional directors and representatives of United Nations agencies based in Dakar. The meeting reviewed the political/security situation in the region, in particular the Sahel, as well as maritime piracy, transnational organized crime, and peace consolidation efforts in the Mano River basin. He also continued to consult closely with my other Special Representatives in West Africa.

52. UNOWA continued to participate in the development of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, in line with Security Council resolution 2056 (2012). My Special Representative hosted discussions among various United Nations entities in Dakar in March 2013, and actively contributed to the finalization of the strategy.

Cooperation with regional and subregional partners

53. Since my previous report, UNOWA continued to provide support to ECOWAS in the implementation of its Conflict Prevention Framework. On 14 January, my Special Representative travelled to Abuja to meet with the President of the ECOWAS Commission to review the situation in the subregion. My Special Representative and the President also reviewed areas of cooperation between UNOWA and ECOWAS, including the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime, the development of a strategic framework to combat piracy, the development of a subregional security strategy for the Mano River area, the development of regional strategies on counter-terrorism and the enhancement of governance in the

security sector. As a follow-up to the meeting, a desk-to-desk meeting of UNOWA and ECOWAS was held in Dakar on 14 June to review the ongoing political and security trends in the subregion and agree on a set of joint initiatives on the prevention of conflict and the promotion of good governance.

54. UNOWA also continued to provide support to ECOWAS for the incorporation of conflict prevention mechanisms into electoral planning processes, as part of the implementation of the 2011 Praia Declaration on Elections and Stability in West Africa. From 18 to 20 June, UNOWA, in partnership with ECOWAS, the Open Society Initiative for West Africa and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, a non-governmental organization, organized a workshop which brought together the presidents and representatives of electoral commissions from the 16 countries of the subregion to develop strategies and programmes to prevent, manage and mitigate election-related violence.

55. My Special Representative also continued to assist the work of the Mano River Union on the basis of the joint Strategic Framework of Cooperation for Peace and Security. He participated in the twenty-second ordinary session of Heads of State and Government of the Mano River Union, held in Monrovia on 30 April. At the request of the Secretary-General of the Mano River Union, UNOWA provided support for the cost assessment and programming of the Operational Plan for Peace and Security, adopted at the summit of Heads of State and Government of the Manu River Union held in Conakry on 15 June 2012. After the initial deployment of a consultant to the Mano River Union secretariat, UNOWA provided technical and financial support for the organization of a workshop of senior government experts, with the participation of ECOWAS and the United Nations, held in Conakry from 20 to 23 March. The workshop successfully consolidated the Operational Plan and assessed its costs. While UNOWA has committed itself to strengthening the capacity of the Peace and Security Unit of the Mano River Union, the concerned member States are yet to second staff to establish its structure.

IV. Observations and recommendations

56. West Africa continues to face numerous challenges to peace and security, mainly due to instability in the Sahel region, as manifested recently in Mali, as well as the effects of transnational organized crime and other cross-border issues affecting the countries of the Mano River basin and of the Gulf of Guinea.

57. The leaders of ECOWAS and the Mano River Union have shown a commendable commitment to strengthen regional capacities for conflict prevention and to build a collective security architecture. I encourage international partners to offer much-needed multifaceted support to these efforts.

58. I reiterate my appreciation to West African States and institutions for the role they played in addressing the crisis in Mali, in cooperation with the African Union, the European Union and France. As the United Nations takes over from the African Union on 1 July, we will ensure that strategic dialogue and operational coordination with the African Union and ECOWAS continues, including on dialogue and reconciliation. In that regard, I welcome the steps already taken by the ECOWAS mediation team, under the leadership of President Compaoré of Burkina Faso, with the support of the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union.

59. Recent attempts by terrorist groups to destabilize the Niger highlight the risk of the Malian crisis spilling over to neighbouring countries. They also remind us all that we need to remain focused on the Sahel and to support the efforts of countries in the region to address the root causes of instability. United Nations efforts in this regard will seek to complement measures taken by the States of the Sahel, West Africa and the Maghreb, as well as regional entities, including the African Union, ECOWAS, the Arab Maghreb Union and the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States.

60. The implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel will require the sustained engagement of the United Nations system as a whole over a period of years. In order to maximize its impact on the region, its implementation should rest on the strong engagement of UNOWA and the United Nations system in the region with a view to creating a regionally owned mechanism. Regional early warning capacities across the Sahel will be strengthened under the lead role of UNOWA, with the support of all United Nations entities involved in the implementation of the strategy.

61. I am concerned by the growing impact of terrorism on the countries of the subregion, as demonstrated by the hostage-taking incidents and terrorist attacks perpetrated during the reporting period. I welcome the adoption of the ECOWAS subregional counter-terrorism strategy and call upon the international community to support its implementation. I also urge countries in the subregion to work on prevention, on addressing conditions that help to breed terrorism and on providing tailored responses to the varied threats, including speeches that incite violence and terrorism. To effectively tackle the problem, there is a need for more concerted efforts through an integrated and multidisciplinary response, encompassing security, development, good governance, human rights and the rule of law.

62. I welcome the efforts of the Government of Nigeria to resolve the Boko Haram crisis in the north-east of the country. While the United Nations fully supports the efforts of Nigeria to address acts of terrorism, I encourage its authorities to uphold human rights and international rules and standards in the conduct of its military operations.

63. I remain concerned about election-related tensions that affect the prospects for political stability and economic development in several countries in the subregion. In Guinea, I welcome the most recent efforts made by key stakeholders, including the President, to create the space for political dialogue with the opposition, with the support of the team of facilitators, led by my Special Representative for West Africa. I appeal to all Guinean stakeholders to rapidly and genuinely advance the dialogue process with a view to overcoming the technical and political obstacles to the holding of the long-awaited legislative elections.

64. I am concerned about delays in the holding of legislative elections in Togo and Mauritania. I call upon those countries in which constitutional order is yet to be fully restored, such as Mali and Guinea-Bissau, to continue working towards the holding of free and fair elections. I reiterate the readiness of the United Nations to work hand in hand with ECOWAS and other partners to ensure that countries adhere to the relevant normative frameworks, including the Praia Declaration on Elections and Stability in West Africa.

65. Transnational organized crime and illicit drug trafficking are growing threats to West Africa's peace and stability. I welcome the decision of ECOWAS to extend

its Regional Action Plan to Address the Growing Problem of Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse in West Africa for an additional two years. I encourage the organization to update and revise the plan through a comprehensive and inclusive process in order to address complex issues, such as money-laundering and regional prosecutorial cooperation. I also welcome the conclusions of the WACI assessment mission to Sierra Leone and call on the international community to provide sufficient support for implementing its recommendations.

66. The governance of the security sector remains a key concern for the stability of States in West Africa. I encourage ECOWAS to finalize and adopt the subregional political framework and plan of action on security sector governance and reform. The United Nations stands ready to support the process.

67. In Guinea, it will be crucial to sustain the progress made in security sector reform, which is critical for the country's stability. I commend the personal commitment and leadership of President Alpha Condé in pursuing this reform and request Member States to continue to support the work of the United Nations security sector reform team in the country. I recommend the further extension of the team to continue providing strategic advice, as well as assistance on criminal justice in conjunction with the European Union, and the strengthening of international coordination in this area.

68. I am encouraged by the collective efforts of the subregion to counter maritime piracy, which is a growing threat to security and economic activities. I welcome the commitment of the ECCAS, ECOWAS and GGC to develop a regional anti-piracy strategy, with United Nations support as mandated by resolution 2039 (2012). In this regard, I welcome the holding of the summit in Cameroon and the adoption of the Code of Conduct concerning the Prevention and Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships, and Illegal Maritime Activities in West and Central Africa, which defines the regional strategy and paves the way for a legally binding instrument. I encourage all Member States in the region to sign and implement the Code of Conduct and I call on bilateral and international partners to provide the necessary resources.

69. I commend the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission for its accomplishments in relation to the demarcation of the boundary between the two countries and encourage the Governments to continue their efforts towards resolving the remaining areas of disagreement, with a view to completing the mandate in compliance with the International Court of Justice ruling of 10 October 2002.

70. The final meeting of the Follow-Up Committee, marking the end of the transition period following the transfer of authority over the Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon, will be convened in New York in September 2013. In this context, I welcome the progress made through the effective implementation of the Greentree Agreement. I commend President Paul Biya of Cameroon and President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria for their dedication to this innovative example of peaceful resolution of border disputes, with the support of the United Nations. What has been achieved over the past decade thanks to the constructive attitude shown by the leadership of both countries, under the auspices of the United Nations, is gratifying and provides an example of dispute resolution that could serve as a model in many other situations.

71. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the Governments of West Africa, ECOWAS, the African Union and the Mano River Union for their continued cooperation. I also extend my gratitude to the United Nations entities in West Africa, civil society organizations and other partners for their continued collaboration with UNOWA in the implementation of its mandate. I would like to express my appreciation to my Special Representative, the staff of UNOWA and the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission for their efforts to advance peace and security in West Africa.